



NEWS RELEASE

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District Attorney Jackie Lacey Honors Local Heroes, Acts of Bravery

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey today recognized five Los Angeles County residents who acted bravely and at considerable personal risk to help crime victims in the Long Beach area.

They include a woman who fearlessly foiled a robbery at a jewelry store, three men who subdued a drunken driver responsible for a fatal car crash on the 710 Freeway and a young woman who shielded a friend during a brutal domestic violence attack.

"Today, we are here to say 'thank you' to five people who took incredibly brave steps to protect victims of crime," District Attorney Jackie Lacey said.

"Not only did they make the hard decision to intervene in spite of danger, they also helped advance justice."

The District Attorney's Office presents Courageous Citizen Awards several times a year to ordinary people who have performed extraordinary acts of valor and selflessness in assisting in criminal prosecutions, aiding victims, preventing crimes, or capturing suspects.

The honorees are:

Carrie Beltran, 31, of Long Beach (Case NA092840)

Ms. Beltran bravely thwarted a robbery at her uncle's jewelry store on Anaheim Street in Long Beach.

On July 16, 2012, Ms. Beltran dropped off her baby with her aunt at her uncle's shop. As she left the store, a robber entered, jumped over the counter and beat Ms. Beltran's uncle with a gun. During the assault, a shot was discharged from the firearm. Ms. Beltran's aunt, who was holding her baby, hit the suspect and was pushed to the ground.

From outside, Ms. Beltran could see the commotion occurring inside the store. She re-entered the shop and mercilessly attacked the suspect until he was subdued by her uncle, an employee and a passerby. The suspect was restrained until law enforcement arrived.

On May 20, 2013, the suspect pleaded no contest to two counts of second-degree robbery with personal use of a firearm and great bodily injury. He was sentenced to 20 years in state prison.

The case was investigated by the Long Beach Police Department.

Jeffrey Wood, 26, of Sunland, Raul Real, 26, and Erick Aquino, 25, both of Los Angeles (Case NAO93868)

Three good Samaritans chased and restrained a drunken driver responsible for a fatal car crash on the 710 Freeway.

In the late evening of Nov. 2, 2012, the suspect was driving drunk and ended up traveling northbound on the southbound lanes of the 710 Freeway. At a high rate of speed, the drunken driver caused a head-on collision with another car that had two occupants. One victim died while the other suffered major injuries.

After the collision, the suspect got out of his car and tried to flee. Mr. Wood, Mr. Real and Mr. Aquino were bystanders who got out of their respective vehicles, tried to render assistance to the victims and chased after the suspect. They caught up to the drunken driver and detained him until police arrived.

On Dec. 9, 2013, the defendant pleaded no contest to gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated and was sentenced to 15 years in state prison.

The case was investigated by the Long Beach Police Department.

Jessica Sanchez, 19, of Los Angeles (Case NAO95536)

Ms. Sanchez put her friend's well-being before her own during a vicious attack that began in San Pedro.

On April 20, 2013, Ms. Sanchez and a friend were lured to a home by the friend's ex-boyfriend for a child custody visit. Once at the home, the two women realized the child was not there. The ex-boyfriend then tried to seduce the friend, but his advances were rebuffed. Enraged, he began to beat her.

Ms. Sanchez immediately went to her friend's aid. The two women broke free and escaped to a park. The suspect followed and continued the violent assault. Ms. Sanchez intervened and was punched by the attacker. Finally, the two women retreated to a safe location and called 911.

On March 11, 2014, over the People's objection, the defendant pleaded no contest and was sentenced to one year in jail. As part of the negotiation with the court, he accepted two strikes on his record.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department, Harbor Division.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office prosecuted more than 73,000 felony defendants and 113,000 misdemeanor defendants.